

# PRESS RELEASE

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## BATTLE TO RETHINK POLICING COSTS MAKING PROGRESS

**Cochrane, Ontario – September 9, 2013:** – After two years of driving the issue of Policing costs, there is positive advancement where many municipalities will potentially realize significant savings. The Mayor of Cochrane, who sits on the Executive Committee of the Mayors’ Coalition for Affordable, Sustainable and Accountable Policing (ASAP) reported to Council that Cochrane could save hundreds of thousands per year on costs.

In his regular report to Council, Mayor Peter Politis reported that there seems to be a break through on the immediate costing impacts of the OPP policing service. A specialized committee consisting of OPP, the Ministry of Correctional Services and the Mayors’ Coalition on Policing ASAP are coming to a consensus on a costing formula that would see a “Base” cost for policing equalized across the province while adding a “Plus” cost to reflect local policing dynamics. The “Base Plus” approach means the disparity between some municipalities paying over \$1,100 per household, while others are only paying \$9 per household for basically the same service, become more equitable. Mayor Politis says that there are “common” costs across the province that can be shared equally and the “Base” calculation would be an equal sharing of that amount which is approximately 66% of the overall cost. “This is a big step towards bringing fairness to northern and rural municipalities regarding their provincial policing costs.”

The “Plus” cost discussion has been focussing on a new “per call” formula but remains an issue requiring more dialogue. Importantly, this equal base will result in significant reduction to the police services budget, stated Politis.

Mayor Politis indicated how this could impact the community of Cochrane by stating, “This formula would see Cochrane go from about \$819 per household to between \$450 and \$500 per household, which translates into hundreds of thousands of dollars in savings. On top of the about \$400,000 savings already being realized from these efforts, the overall savings on a five million dollar tax levy could be significant.”

He concludes by reminding everyone that while this concerted direction is good news, there remains much work to do on finalizing it by the targeted January 1, 2014. As well, there remains much to discuss on the other driving issues associated to policing costs that remain on the table, like accountability back to the local tax payer; the powers of the police services boards and whether the municipal budgets are the best place for sourcing the funding.

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## **BACKGROUND:**

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Currently, municipalities are handed a bill from the province to pay for policing services and have little say in the strategic and spending practices behind it. This has resulted in an unsustainable model that continues to add costs annually instead of managing those costs in accordance with the needs of the people paying the bill, the municipalities. The model is premised on a complicated formula that has created an unfair distribution of costs across municipalities while being an obstacle to the accountability required by elected municipal leaders to the people whom they collect taxes from.

The current approach leads to situations where municipalities have no direct control over how their policing budget is spent; little input into strategy, and little ability to report back to their constituents of how the monies were spent. These issues need to be addressed through direct dialogue with the Ministry and the Mayors Coalition, working together as political leaders and collaborating together to form a real partnership between the Province and Municipalities on this issue.

The Mayors' Coalition for Affordable, Sustainable, Accountable, Policing is a consortium of concerned municipalities who have formed a coalition of municipally elected representatives, seeking to address the unsustainable cost of police service through a reformed partnership model, or the complete removal of the payment for the service from the municipal tax levy all together. The coalition has grown from 22 members to over 160 members in one short year and continues to receive new members and new commitment to resources daily on this issue. Cochrane Mayor Peter Politis sits on the Executive Committee along with five other Mayors seeking the best outcomes.

Much more information can be found at their website at [www.mayorscoalition.com](http://www.mayorscoalition.com).

